




THIS IS SERIOUS

I'm a young, healthy woman and after a tonsillectomy, I was told I had a blood clot in a vein in my leg called deep vein thrombosis or DVT. I had no idea I could get a blood clot in my leg after surgery, or how it could affect my life. Luckily I was diagnosed and treated, but now I have permanent vein damage in my leg and it's painful to do many of the things I love, like walking my dog. I'm living with DVT but it could have been prevented. This is serious; please listen to me because you may be at risk...


*Nina*



When I was getting chemotherapy for cancer, I spent a lot of time in bed. I noticed that one of my legs was swollen, red, and tender to touch. At first, I thought it was the cancer, but I asked my healthcare provider and learned I had a blood clot called DVT in a deep vein in my leg. I didn't know that prolonged inactivity or cancer treatment were risk factors that could cause blood clots. Now, I'm not only a cancer survivor, I am also a DVT survivor. Please listen to me and find out if you too are at risk...

*Sara*

LISTEN TO ME



KNOW YOUR RISK

At 40, I was thrilled to be pregnant. A few weeks after giving birth, I had a pain in my leg that wouldn't go away. Then, I began having trouble breathing and felt very sick. I had a blood clot in my leg (DVT), and a piece of this clot traveled to my lungs. This is called a pulmonary embolism (PE). I was really scared and was afraid I might not see my baby grow up. I didn't know that pregnancy could put me at risk for getting blood clots. DVT is serious but it can be treated and can often be prevented. Please listen to me and find out if you're at risk...

*Mary*

None of these women ever thought DVT would happen to them. Anyone may be at risk for DVT and PE. These women are sharing their stories to encourage you to know your risk factors and discuss them with your healthcare provider. For more information on DVT and PE, including the risk factors, symptoms, signs, prevention, and treatment, visit [www.thisisserious.org](http://www.thisisserious.org).

## WHAT IS DVT?

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) occurs when an abnormal blood clot forms in a large vein. These clots usually develop in the lower leg, thigh, or pelvis, but can also occur in other veins in the body. DVT is generally preventable and treatable, but is under-diagnosed.

## WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS?

We've checked our risk factors, **what are yours?** Talk to your healthcare provider to learn how to protect yourself. The more risk factors you have, the greater your chances are of developing a blood clot.

Nina	Sara	Mary	Me
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Hospitalization for a medical illness
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Recent major surgery or trauma
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Personal history of a clotting disorder or previous DVT
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Cancer and cancer treatments
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Increasing age
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Pregnancy and the first 6 weeks after delivery
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Hormone replacement therapy or birth control products
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Family history of DVT
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Extended bed rest
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Obesity
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Smoking
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Prolonged sitting when traveling (longer than 6 to 8 hours)

## DVT SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS:

The most common symptoms of DVT are:

- Recent swelling of the limb
- Unexplained pain or tenderness
- Redness of the skin
- Skin that may be warm to the touch

Some people with DVT may have no symptoms at all.

## DVT AND PULMONARY EMBOLISM (PE):

DVT can cause a life-threatening complication, called pulmonary embolism (PE). This occurs when part or all of a DVT breaks free from its original site in a vein and travels through the blood stream into the lungs. A blood clot in the lungs is serious and can cause death.

Symptoms of possible PE include:

- Coughing up blood
- Recent or sudden shortness of breath
- Sudden collapse
- Chest pain or discomfort, which worsens with a deep breath or coughing

*If you have any of these symptoms, it is an emergency and you should seek medical help immediately.*

## WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PREVENT DVT AND PE:

In general:

- Exercise regularly
  - Maintain a healthy weight
  - Don't smoke
- When sitting for long periods of time, or when traveling for more than six hours:
  - Exercise your legs frequently while you're sitting
  - Get up and walk around every 2 to 3 hours
  - Wear loose-fitting clothes
  - Drink plenty of water, and limit alcohol and caffeine

Before and during hospitalization:

- Before any surgery, talk to your healthcare provider about prevention of blood clots
- Tell your healthcare provider if you have any risk factors for DVT
- Ask questions
- If you have been confined to bed, move around as soon as possible
- After surgery or hospitalization for a medical illness, a small dose of anticoagulant medication is often given to prevent DVT and PE

For more information on DVT and PE including risk factors, symptoms, signs, prevention, and treatment, **visit [thisisserious.org](http://thisisserious.org)**



The CDC does not endorse private products or services.



This Is Serious is powered by the Vascular Disease Foundation® (VDF) and its Venous Disease Coalition in cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Hospitals and other organizations are working with VDF in a multi-media campaign aimed at educating women about DVT/PE and motivating them to take action if they believe they may be at risk. VDF is the only multidisciplinary national non-profit organization focused on providing public education to improve health for all by reducing death and disability from vascular disease.